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Back to the Roots. The Correspondence Between Leo Strauss and Jacob Klein

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Abstract: This paper will explore the correspondence between Leo Strauss and Jacob Klein, two thinkers of Jewish origin with a keen interest in Greek origins. Besides being close friends, both were engaged in an attempt to recover the roots of Greek philosophy. The first section (I) briefly addresses the way in which Strauss and Klein responded to contemporary political developments. The second section (II), discusses some of the most striking elements in Strauss' rediscovery of political philosophy, ancient and modern, as they become apparent in his letters to Klein. The third and final section (III) focuses on Klein's recovery of Greek philosophy.

Keywords:
Strauss, Klein, Art of writing, Roots, Politics, Science

Introduction

When Martin Heidegger delivered a series of seminars on Plato's *Sophist* in the early 1920s, most of those attending soon realized they were witnessing something remarkable. Bracketing several centuries of scholarly commentary, Heidegger chose to confront the dialogue in its own terms, reading Plato as a contemporary who had something worthwhile to say about questions of the utmost importance.[1]

For many of his students, the seminars on the *Sophist* gave the decisive impulse for their own philosophical projects, either as a continuation of the path broken by Heidegger, or in critical deviation from it.[2] Two students in particular, however, chose to remain as close as possible to the original impulse itself. As one of them later noted "[Heidegger] intended to uproot Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle, but this presupposed the laying bare of its roots, the laying bare of it as it was and not just as it had come to appear in the light of the tradition and of modern philosophy."[3] Thus, Leo Strauss, speaking for himself and for his friend Jacob Klein, summed up the profound effect of Heidegger's teaching.

This is substantiated when we turn to the correspondence they held for four decades, and which was published in the third volume of Strauss' *Gesammelte Schriften*.[4] The exchange provides us with some invaluable pieces of information about Strauss's thought. In his letters, he pronounces on some of his basic views, both philosophical and political, with rare clarity and candor. In addition, the correspondence enables us to determine what may have been Strauss' intellectual *akmè*: the letters written between 1938 and 1939 – not surprisingly his most prolific period as a letter-writer – are a breath-taking report of his rediscovery of medieval and classical thought and its art of writing.

My discussion in this paper is divided in three parts. The first section (I) briefly addresses the way in which three salient features of contemporary politics come to light in the correspondence: the Jewish Question, the rise of Nazism, and political Zionism. The second section (II), discusses some of the most striking elements in Strauss' rediscovery of political philosophy, ancient and modern. The third and final section (III) focuses on the philosophical relationship between Strauss and Klein, their differences and agreements, as well as their mutual criticisms.

I.

Reading those letters that deal specifically with politics, one cannot help noticing the dark shadow of persecution. In March 1933, only days after Hitler forced the Enabling Act on the Reichstag, Klein notes: "There will never again be a parliamentary democracy in Germany – this much is certain." (GS III 461) At the same time, however, he is still convinced that, in spite of growing anti-Semitism and the lack of effective organized response from abroad, "The Jewish Question is not essential." (Ibid.) Seven months later, when the first concentration camps are already operative, his perception appears to have changed little. Noting that "The Nazis are up and about to compromise *everything* that really matters", he still does not believe that "the catastrophe will happen right now", nor that "the present form of government in Germany will endure" (GS III 478). As for the Jewish Question, although it remains for him essentially a paradigm of the plight of humanity as a whole, his concern has acquired an almost religious tone: "in my old age, I may become pious again..." (Ibid.)

By June 1934, shortly before the Night of the Long Knives, the blinders have fallen off. In a letter written from Denmark, Klein dramatically corrects his own previous view of Nazism as part of a more general anti-liberal movement: "National Socialism has only one founding principle: anti-Semitism." (GS III 512) Interestingly enough, he presents this fundamental opposition in a theological cast: "It is indeed the first *decisive* battle between that which from of old bears the name of God and

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godlessness ('Gott-losigkeit'). There's no doubt about that. The battle is decisive, because it takes place on a battleground determined by *Judaism*: National Socialism is "perverted Judaism", and nothing else: Judaism without God, i.e., a true *contradictio in adiecto*" (GS III 512-513).

In the light of the predicament thus understood, Klein goes on to criticize Zionism for its pedestrian nationalism and its refusal to come to terms with the question of its own Judaic origins. This assessment provokes a spirited response from Strauss: although he agrees that Nazism is secularized Judaism, he rebukes his friend for his "theistic" turn (GS III 527), insisting that "there is no need to 'crawl back to the cross', I mean, to speak of 'God'" (GS III 516). Subsequently, he goes on to outline his position vis-à-vis Jewish orthodox faith with remarkable frankness:

> And even if we were to be huddled into the ghetto once again and thus be compelled to go to the synagogue and to observe the law in its entirety, then this too we would have to do as philosophers, i.e., with a *reserve* (*Vorbehalt*) which, if ever so tacit, must for that very reason be all the more determined. (...) That revelation and philosophy are at one in their opposition to sophistry, i.e., the whole of modern philosophy, I deny as little as you do. However, this doesn't change anything regarding the fundamental difference between philosophy and revelation: philosophy, while it may perhaps be brought under one roof with faith, prayer and preaching, can never be brought into agreement with them. (GS III 516)

In the same letter, this distinction is subsequently reiterated on a different plane. Rejoining Klein's critical remarks on Zionism, Strauss appears to indicate that philosophical reserve regarding religious orthodoxy necessarily finds its counterpart in adherence to "strictly political Zionism":

> It is not without good reason that I have always been a "Zionist". In its motivation, Zionism is (...) the most *respectable* Jewish movement - and, for that matter, only political Zionism, not 'cultural' Zionism. And, in this respect, there is only one alternative: political Zionism or orthodoxy. (GS III 517)

In this last remark, Strauss rehearses a thesis he had vigorously defended in a number of publications written at the end of the 1920s, to wit that "political Zionism is the organization of unbelief within Judaism", and that "Political Zionism, wishing to ground itself radically, must ground itself as unbelieving (*sich als ungläubig begründen*). The conflict between political Zionism and its radical opponents can only be conducted as a battle between belief and unbelief."[5] Thus, it is hardly surprising that his Zionist writings of the 20s often voice sharp criticism of contemporary Jewish orthodoxy.[6]

Taken together, both passages make it clear that philosophic *unbelief* underlies both Strauss's thought and his action. Moreover, as the first passage shows, this unbelief must be distinguished from the unbelief characteristic of modern philosophy, which is disparaged as "sophistry". In spite of their forcefulness, however, these assertions leave at least two questions unresolved. To begin with, Strauss' insistence that there is no need to speak of God in addressing the Jewish Question stands in contrast to his own Zionist publications of the 1920's, many of which deal with the theological-political problem explicitly and at considerable length. Second, and more important, it is not clear how his allegiance to un-modern unbelief correlates with his adherence to a political movement that, as his own study of Spinoza's *Critique of Religion* had led him to conclude, is heir to modern unbelief and "sophistry".[7]

Apparently, Strauss soon became aware of this latter problem. In *Philosophy and Law*, published in 1935, he characterizes political Zionism as "a resolution that is indeed highly honorable but not, in earnest and in the long run, adequate".[8] Not surprisingly, this dismissal is welcomed by Klein, who had remained unconvinced by his friend's earlier statement.[9] Zionism, Klein had upheld, was incapable of facing "the problem of the uniqueness of the Jewish people", a problem that could not be understood "without the history of the Jews and thus without – 'God'" (GS III 519). It is not clear whether this remark had any influence on Strauss's eventual change of perception. However this may be, it is perhaps not amiss to point out that in the autobiographical writings of the mid-'60's, Strauss's critique of political Zionism uses arguments reminiscent of Klein's initial objections.[10]

Moreover, in his epistolary comments on *Philosophy and Law*, Klein provides an important clue to the understanding of a book that is now generally recognized as a turning point in Strauss' intellectual odyssey. Referring to the introduction, where Strauss points out the Enlightenment's failure to decisively refute revelation, Klein asks: "In any case, *following* your presentation, one could come to the result: why not orthodoxy?" (GS III 539) That, indeed, is the question bound to arise from Strauss's key contention in *Philosophy and Law* that the "intellectual probity" which he identifies as the "ultimate justification" of the Enlightenment, is at the same time the fateful heir of biblical morality.[11] If the conflict between orthodoxy and Enlightenment ultimately presents us with the choice between biblical faith and its rebellious derivative, why not choose the original?

In his letter, Klein, however, immediately goes to some length in answering his own question, by pointing to a "*very*, *very* important" distinction, made by Strauss in a footnote, between "the new probity" and "the old love of truth" (Ibid.) In the same footnote, Strauss stresses: "if one makes atheism, which is admittedly not demonstrable, into a positive dogmatic premise, then the probity expressed by it is something very different from the love of truth".[12] Although the "old love of truth", curiously enough, is not mentioned anywhere else in the book, its inconspicuousness belies its importance.[13] If anything, it indicates that Strauss envisages a third way besides the impossible alternative of orthodoxy or dogmatic atheism. In this respect, his choice of words deserves our attention, especially in a book devoted entirely to unearthing the connection between medieval Jewish and Islamic philosophy and Plato. Having abandoned his adherence to the modern unbelief of political Zionism, and seeking to uphold his un-modern unbelief and "zetetic" scepticism in the face of orthodoxy and the dogmatically conscientious atheism of modern philosophy, it seems that Strauss is seeking to recover the *eros* of ancient, Platonic-Socratic philosophy.[14]

II.

This impression is reinforced when we turn to consider the development of Strauss's scholarly research as it is reflected in the exchange with Klein. At the moment of their debate on Nazism, Judaism and Zionism, Strauss is living in England and studying Hobbes. In his reports to Klein, he argues that Hobbes should be considered equal or even superior to Descartes as a founder of modernity: he surpasses his French contemporary in radicalness and originality, insofar as his critique of aristocratic virtue supplies the moral and anthropological basis to Descartes' theoretical revolution. In support of this claim, Strauss advances the well-known thesis which is developed at length in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*: the foundations of Hobbes's political philosophy were laid long before his espousal of the Cartesian scientific paradigm, and involved a momentous turn to history in the interest of the applicability of the philosophical precepts inherited from the Aristotelian tradition.[15]

However, the correspondence throws additional light on Strauss's intentions with regard to a point that is never made fully explicit in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*. As Klein recognizes, the probing quest for the roots of Hobbes's thought is conducted with the aim of reaching the fundamental level where a direct confrontation becomes possible between Hobbes and *Socrates*, between the father of modern political philosophy and the father of pre-modern political philosophy.[16] In the book this confrontation is replaced by a confrontation between Hobbes and *Plato* (and, to a lesser extent, Aristotle). A closer look at the argument, however, reveals that Plato's position is identified by questions that are unmistakably Socratic: the question of "what is good and fitting", as well as the question "as to the aim of the State".[17] As a result, the conclusion of this confrontation can be transposed in terms of the confrontation as it was initially intended: Hobbes attempted to repeat the Socratic founding without understanding the full depth and complexity of the underlying Socratic question regarding the right way of life and the best state.

Of course, this criticism implies that, at this point, Strauss has already developed something like a new and unconventional interpretation of the Socratic-Platonic position. This, indeed, becomes apparent from a letter to Klein: just as in the case of Hobbes, he held it possible to gain access to Hobbes's thought as a whole by starting from his politics, he now asserts: "I believe that the question regarding the right way of life and the right state, as well as the answer to it, does not depend on answering the question regarding the being of the Ideas (...)."[18] Furthermore, he suggests that understanding Socratic-Platonic politics requires recognition of its pre-modern, undogmatic character, as well as a careful reading of the Platonic dialogues: "In any case, I believe it to be an essential part of Plato's concept of Sophistry that the dogmatic denial of cosmic order is the basis of all sophistic politics, while the right politics is not based on the *presupposition* of cosmic order (compare the plan of Protagoras' speech in the *Protagoras* with the plan of the *Timaeus*)." (GS III 529)

Other letters of the same period (1937-1938) confirm the impression that Strauss has begun to rediscover Plato's art of writing as the key to understanding his dialogues.[19] This breakthrough, moreover, is accompanied by a similar revolution in his understanding of medieval philosophy, especially Maimonides. Earlier on, in *Philosophy and Law*, he had concluded - albeit hesitatingly - that the Platonism of the *falasifa* lacked the "sharpness, originality, depth and – ambiguity of Platonic politics".[20] As he interpreted their position at that time, they held that prophecy – ultimately superior to philosophy – had answered and fulfilled the Platonic requirement of an ideal law, thereby blunting the "questioning inquiry" underlying that requirement.

With the incipient recovery of exotericism, however, his view has completely reversed. Instead of blunting and modifying it, he now finds, the *falasifa* actually *preserve* and *continue* the Platonic inquiry and its equivocality. Writing from New York, where he has travelled from England to explore job opportunities at the beginning of 1938, he informs his friend:

> Maimonides becomes ever more exciting. He was truly a free spirit. (...) The crucial question for him was not creation or eternity of the world (for he was convinced of the eternity of the world), but rather, whether the ideal lawgiver must be a prophet. And this question, he answered - in the negative, as did Farabi before him and Averroes at the same time. (GS III 545)

Like Farabi and Averroes, Maimonides availed himself of Plato's rhetoric in order to conceal and protect his philosophic unbelief. In the letters following this initial avowal, Strauss reports with mounting enthusiasm and admiration about his exploration of the *Guide*, in an amazing crescendo of discoveries. "You cannot imagine the infinite cunning and irony with which Maimonides treats 'religion'." (GS III 549) In this respect, Maimonides is even seen to surpass the hero of Strauss's youth: "The *Guide* is the most extraordinary book I, at least, know. That which N[ietzsche] had in mind in writing the *Zarathustra*, namely a parody of the Bible, M[aimonides] has accomplished on a much grander scale." (GS III 553)

At the same time, Strauss is well aware of the controversy his interpretation is bound to stir up: 'When I let this bomb explode in a few years (...) a great battle will flare up' (GS III 550). The stakes involved, he notes, are momentous. Reflecting on Maimonides's stature for contemporary Judaism as a mediator between the biblical and the philosophical tradition, he notes: 'the demonstration that Maim[onides] was *simply* not a Jew in his faith - [will turn] out to be of considerable significance for the present: the fundamental irreconcilability of philosophy and Judaism (expressed "clearly" in the second chapter of *Genesis*) will be demonstrated *ad oculos*' (Ibid.). In view of the possible consequences, it does not come entirely as a surprise to see Strauss entertaining second thoughts concerning his own strategy, perhaps comparing it to Maimonides's Platonic tactic. Reverting to Nietzsche's equally Platonic query - 'when I hold the truth in my fist, may I open the fist?' -, he observes: 'our situation becomes ever more medieval, the difference between freedom of thinking and freedom of expression ever more visible. That is a kind of "progress"' (Ibid.).[21] At any rate, the prospects are not entirely bleak, he notes not without a

touch of ironic self-pity: 'In short, I often shudder at what I have brought about by my interpretation. The end of it will be that I, poor devil, must ladle out the broth that diabolical magician of the 12th century has poured out for me' (GS III 554).

This, however, is only the beginning of what soon turns out to be a consummate banquet. In rapid succession, Strauss begins to uncover the art of writing in a host of Greek writers, not only in philosophers such as Plato and Xenophon (as well as Aristotle), but also in historians like Herodotus and Thucydides, as well as in comic, tragic and epic poets, such as Aristophanes, Sophocles, Parmenides, Hesiod and even Homer. In a postscript, he tells Klein: 'I begin to have an inkling of how *misunderstood* ('unverstanden') the ancients are' (GS III 558). To give a detailed account of his findings is beyond the scope of this paper; moreover, many elements can be found in his works and need not be repeated here. Hence, I will limit myself to one or two points that remain somewhat oblique or ambiguous in his publications.

Compared to his published interpretations, to begin with, Strauss' reports to Klein are far more candid regarding the unorthodox and irreverent perspective of the said authors. What unites the latter, as they emerge in his investigations, is a veiled but deeply critical view of political life, its characteristic ideals of courage (*andreia*) and gentlemanliness (*kalokagathia*), and its concomitant understanding of the Beautiful, the Just, and the Good. By means of ironic presentations of speeches and deeds, they reveal to the perceptive reader the lack of wisdom and moderation evinced by major political actors and dignitaries such as Pericles and Cyrus. Surreptitiously counteracting the sway of opinion, law and myth through the judicious use of opinion, law and myth, each in his writings aims at providing a true education (*paideia*) to wisdom.[22]

Nevertheless, the correspondence leaves many questions unanswered regarding Strauss' understanding of the quarrel between philosophy and poetry. Though he recognizes the implicit claim of the *Symposium* that Socratic-Platonic philosophy merges tragedy and comedy in a way that transcends and surpasses both, he argues the basic identity of the Platonic and the Xenophontic Socrates by approximating both to the wily Odysseus.[23] The fundamental question of how the origins of Socratic philosophy are related to pre-Socratic poetry, especially Homer and Hesiod, has been explored with great competence and acumen by one of Strauss's most gifted pupils, Seth Benardete. The latter, in a tribute to his teacher, called this question "the most puzzling as well as the most unexpected aspect in Strauss' recovery of Plato and philosophy".[24] In fact, Strauss himself had provoked this puzzlement and surprise, when he wrote the following to Benardete: "Some day my belief that Homer started it all and that there was a continuous tradition from Homer to the end of the 18th century will be vindicated."[25]

III.

In Benardete's account, we also find the following remark: 'There was at least one contemporary of Strauss who had an equally uncanny eye for the unnoticed but significant detail - what he noticed was surprisingly different from what Strauss did'.[26] Although the contemporary remains nameless, the index of the book teaches us that Benardete is referring to his other teacher, Jacob Klein.[27] His judgment, moreover, is certainly pertinent: Klein's talent as an interpreter of pre-modern philosophy and poetry is beyond question, as a brief look at his books suffices to show. While Plato takes pride of place, we also find careful and penetrating readings of Aristotle, Homer, Virgil, and Dante.[28] In addition, we owe to Klein a number of treatises on the problem of speech and the art of writing that are a valuable complement to Strauss' observations.[29]

However, Benardete is equally justified in stressing the difference between the two friends as to the yield of their interpretations, in particular with regard to Plato. A curious division of labor seems to exist between the two friends: whereas Klein's published interpretations include the *Meno*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Parmenides*, *Philebus*, *Ion*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus* and *Timaeus*, Strauss' printed studies are devoted to the *Laws*, *Republic*, *Statesman*, *Minos*, *Euthydemus*, *Crito*, *Apology*, *Euthyphro* and *Symposium* (the latter two, admittedly, were not prepared for publication). As one can see, the only dialogue that would allow a comparison of their interpretations is the *Statesman*.

Regardless of whether this division of labour was in any way intentional on the part of both friends or not, it does allow a preliminary determination of the difference in their respective approaches of Plato. While Strauss' focus is clearly on the 'political' dialogues, Klein concentrates on those dialogues that, for want of a better term, one might call 'scientific', as they are traditionally understood to deal mainly with cosmology, mathematics, ontology and metaphysics. In this respect, the strongly divergent ways in which they approach the Platonic doctrine of Ideas are illustrative. Klein, who devotes considerable energy to elucidating the problem of *methexis* [partaking] and of the *koinonia tôn eidôn* [community of Ideas], proceeds mainly within the horizon of mathematics and, guided by Aristotle's critical comments, interprets it as an ontology.

Strauss, on the other hand, raises this topic only with great caution and reticence, giving precedence to the Socratic question regarding the best life and the best state.[30] Earlier on, I quoted his assertion to Klein 'that the question regarding the right way of life and the right state, as well as the answer to it, does not depend on answering the question regarding the being of the Ideas (...)' (GS III 529). Klein, at any rate, seems to have held a direct approach to the latter question to be both possible and preferable. This difference recurs more conspicuously when Klein's study of *Greek Mathematical Thought* is published in 1934. In a letter praising the work, Strauss concedes that his friend's ontological interpretation renders problematic the 'political' reading of Plato. However, he immediately qualifies his assent unequivocally:

> In my view, you understand the "Good" too neutrally, too "philosophically". More important than disagreements about great and small, hard and soft etc. are disagreements about the just and the unjust etc. Just as the latter are the primary impulse (*Ansatz*) of philosophy, so the Idea of the Good is the principle that must be interpreted starting from this impulse. (GS III 534)

Strauss, it appears, is more persistent than Klein in reading Plato's dialogues in the light of Socrates' second sailing, his turning away from the direct study of nature to the study of nature as it is reflected in human opinion about the most pressing human issues. Thus, two years later, in his book on Hobbes, he asserts that Plato 'opposes to "physiology" not an "ontology" but dialectic'.[31]

This difference between a 'political' and a 'scientific' orientation recurs when we turn to their respective understanding of the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns. For example, it is striking to see Klein and Strauss viewing one and the same problem - the importance of optics for Hobbes and Descartes - from different perspectives, mathematics and physics on the one hand, anthropology and politics on the other.[32] Accordingly, Klein's view of the modern side of the quarrel focuses on the founders of modern natural science (e.g. Descartes, Leibniz, Copernicus, Stevin, Vieta, Brache), whereas political philosophers (Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, and Rousseau) are predominant in Strauss' outlook.

In spite of these differences, however, their accounts of the quarrel are in profound agreement on at least one decisive point: modern philosophy was founded on and in opposition to pre-modern philosophy on the basis of an insufficient understanding of the latter. In his book on Hobbes, Strauss attempts to show that the latter, deluded by the tradition, took for granted the possibility of political philosophy and thus failed to regain the level of Socratic inquiry, where this possibility is the object of permanent re-examination. Similarly, Klein, in his study of Greek mathematics and afterward, never ceases to point out that the founders of modern science, deluded by the tradition, took for granted the possibility of science as they opposed what they considered to be their new and true science to what they disparaged as the old and false science. In modern science, he notes:

> (...) the "natural" foundations are replaced by a *science already in existence*, whose principles are denied, whose methods are rejected, whose "knowledge" is mocked - but whose place within human life as a whole is placed beyond all doubt. *Scientia* appears as an inalienable human good, which may indeed become debased and distorted, but whose worth is beyond question.[33]

Moreover, in the same context, Klein provides a memorable characterization of pre-modern science, as well as an outline of his task as a philosopher and historian in recovering it by reopening the quarrel. Without doubt, his friend was in full agreement:

> Here science stands in original and immediate opposition to a nonscientific attitude which yet is its soul and in which it recognizes is own roots. In attempting to raise itself above this nonscientific attitude, science preserves intact these given foundations. It is therefore both possible and necessary to learn to see Greek science from the point of view of this, its "natural" basis. In its sum-total Greek science represents the whole complex of those "*natural*" *cognitions* which are implied in a prescientific activity moving within the realm of opinion and supported by a preconceptual understanding of the world.[34]

Whether in the guise of the natural cosmic order or in that of natural right, what binds Klein and Strauss is the problem of nature in all its attractive elusiveness. In all of their interpretations of pre-modern and modern thinkers – but also in their shared preoccupation with the question of liberal education – both are constantly mindful of it. That is how they pay their respects to the importance of returning to the beginnings of science. Although this importance had been first impressed upon them by the phenomenology of Husserl and his radical pupil Heidegger, its full dimensions only became visible to them through Plato.[35] In this respect, Klein beautifully and truthfully seizes the heart of their friendship in the dedication he added to Strauss' copy of *Greek Mathematical Thought*: beyond their agreements and disagreements, he writes, is the certitude that 'Plato's dialogue leads us out of the darkness and into the light' (GS III 532).[36]

Notes

[1] Martin Heidegger, *Plato's Sophist* (tr. by R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer), Indiana University Press 1997.

[2] See Richard Wolin, *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Lowith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse*, Princeton University Press, 2001.

[3] Leo Strauss and Jacob Klein, "A Giving of Accounts", *The College* (Annapolis and Santa Fe) 22, no. 1 (Apr.), 2. Cf. Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, New York: Schocken, 1965, 10: "with the questioning of traditional philosophy the traditional understanding of the tradition becomes questionable".

[4] Strauss, *Gesammelte Schriften Band 3: Hobbes politische Wissenschaft und zugehörige Schriften – Briefe*, edited by H. and W. Meier, Stuttgart: Verlag J. B. Metzler 2001. References to this volume are marked with the abbreviation "GS III". References to vol. 1 and 2 of the *Gesammelte Schriften* are marked with "GS I" and "GS II", respectively. All translations are the sole responsibility of the present author.

[5] Cf. GS I 445, 433.

[6] Cf. "Ecclesia militans" and "Biblische Geschichte und Wissenschaft", in GS II 351-356 and 357-361.

[7] Cf. Strauss's Preface to *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*. See also 'Das Testament Spinozas', GS I 415-422.

[8] Strauss, *Philosophy and Law: Contributions to the Understanding of Maimonides and His Predecessors* (tr. E. Adler), New York: State University of New York Press, 1995, 38.

[9] GS III 539.

[10] Cf. Strauss, *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 141-143 and 319-320.

[11] Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, 37-38.

[12] Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, 37, n. 13. See also letter 25a to Krüger, GS III 414.

[13] Cf. GS III 538.

[14] To Krüger, Strauss writes '... that I cannot believe, [and] that therefore I must search for a possibility to *live* without faith. There are two possibilities of this kind: the ancient, i.e., Socratic Platonic, and the modern, i.e., that of the Enlightenment (...).' (GS III 414). Cf. GS III 380. Cf. GS II 610.

[15] Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936, 81-85. Cf. GS III 494, 517-518, 528.

[16] Cf. GS III 420. This is rendered with full clarity in Strauss's correspondence with Gerhard Krüger (cf. letters 13, 21, 21a, 25c, 25d). See also Strauss, *Die Religionskritik des Hobbes*, GS III 270-274.

[17] Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 152-153.

[18] GS III 529. Cf. GS III 527.

[19] Cf. GS III 536; 542.

[20] Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, p. 75.

[21] Compare the introduction to *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1952. See also GS III 586.

[22] Cf. GS III 560, 561-562, 567-568, 569, 574, 576, 580, 582-583, 584, 586. Regarding the *Republic*, he acquaints Klein with his discovery 'that its actual theme is the question regarding the relationship between the political life and the philosophical life, and that it is devoted to a radical critique and rejection of political life' (GS III 568).

[23] Cf. GS III 574, 576.
[24] S. Benardete, *The Argument of the Action: Essays on Greek Poetry and Philosophy* (ed. R. Burger and M. Davis), Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2000, 415-416. See also, by the same author, *The Bow and the Lyre: A Platonic Reading of the* Odyssey, Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield 1997.
[25] Quoted in M. Davis, *Wonderlust: Ruminations on Liberal Education*, South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2006, 136
[26] Benardete, *The Argument of the Action*, 408.
[27] Benardete, *The Argument of the Action*, 428.
[28] J. Klein, *A Commentary on Plato's* Meno, The University of North Carolina Press 1965; *Plato's Trilogy:* Theaetetus, *the* Sophist, *and the* Statesman, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1977; *Lectures and Essays* (ed. R. B. Williamson and E. Zuckerman), Annapolis, MD.: St. John's College Press 1985. Klein's study of Plato and Aristotle already began in the 1930's, as becomes apparent in his first book, *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origins of Algebra*, Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press 1968, originally published between 1934 and 1936.
[29] Cf. 'The Problem and the Art of Writing' and 'Speech, Its Strength and Its Weaknesses', in *Lectures and Essays*, 139-156 and 361-374.
[30] Cf. Strauss, *The City and Man*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964, 119.
[31] Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 145.
[32] Cf. GS III 496-497, 498, 526-527.
[33] Klein, *Greek Mathematical Thought*, 119. Cf. *Lectures and Essays*, 5: 'The claim to communicate true science, true knowledge, necessarily took its bearings from the firmly-established edifice of traditional science'. Cf. ibid., 10, 64, 84.
[34] Klein, *Greek Mathematical Thought*, 119.
[35] Compare their respective critical tributes to Husserl: Klein's 'Phenomenology and the History of Science', in *Essays and Lectures*, 65-84, and Strauss's 'Philosophy as a Rigorous Science and Political Philosophy', in *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy* (ed. with an introduction by T. L. Pangle), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983, 29-37.
[36] I am indebted to Robert Howse and Daniel Tanguay for valuable comments and remarks on previous drafts of this paper.